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NEWS RELEASE

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CEDAR MOUNTAIN IS FOCUS OF COMPREHENSIVE STUDY

A Continuing Education in Ecosystem Management (CEEM) team from Utah State University will spend two weeks conducting a comprehensive study of the Cedar Mountain area beginning June 27, 2005. The team is comprised of land managers who understand the social, biological and physical elements of an ecosystem and apply their knowledge to manage ecosystems and landscapes.

Cedar Mountain is found near Cedar City bordered by the Dixie National Forest, Zion National Park and Bureau of Land Management lands. It is primarily privately owned land with a mix of mature aspen and open grasslands.

"Recently we've seen aspen stands in the Cedar Mountain area dying without replacement or regeneration," explained Ron Wilson, area manager for the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands. "We're not exactly sure what's causing the decline and one of the team's objectives is to shed some light on the factors that may be contributing to that. We're also concerned about development and we are hoping ranchers can stay in business so the area doesn't eventually become subdivided," Wilson said.

Team members will conduct extensive interviews with area residents and other stakeholders to determine the human dimensions at play in the area. For instance, some of the team's goals include a determination of the major concerns of each group in relation to the landscape or community, types of treatment that would be acceptable to landowners, opportunities for educational efforts, and how to mitigate conflicts among stakeholders or user groups.

The team will also attempt to determine future trends if treatments are not undertaken, how wildlife and grazing may effect treatment, and why areas become prone to development. The final report will help landowners identify management options and will provide a perspective on management objectives of other landowners. Additionally, this study will help division foresters and USU Extension specialists in developing plans for proper land management, and education and research efforts in the Cedar Mountain area.

"For more information contact Clint Reese or Ron Wilson at 435-586-4408."

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